



8 June 2005



Independence Day Safety

1. Our Nation was founded by great visionaries who were willing to place the good of all Americans before their own needs. During our 229th celebration of independence, let us follow the example of our Nation's founders and place the good of the Army and our fellow Soldiers, civilian employees, and family members ahead of our own needs. Let us also take a moment to remember all our Americans who are deployed in either combat or peace enforcement operations. I thank each of you for your commitment and sacrifice.

2. As you celebrate our Nation's birthday, I'd ask that you keep the following in mind: So far this fiscal year USAREUR has lost five Soldiers, two DA civilians, and two family members to POV crashes. We also lost three Soldiers to substance abuse. These were all preventable tragedies. I therefore ask you to do the following over the upcoming holiday:

- Whether you are traveling or enjoying water sports or other activities, please take time to assess the risks. Pre-combat checks and inspections are required during deployment. Lives depend on these checks. Make similar checks on yourself and your family before you begin your holiday activities. These checks can make the difference between life and death. For additional assistance, check the *Off-Duty* link on the USAREUR Safety Web site at http://www.per.hqusareur.army.mil/services/safetydivision/usareur_summer_safety_campaign.htm.

- If you choose to drink alcohol, remember to drink responsibly and **DO NOT DRIVE**. Contact your unit prevention leader or the Army Substance Abuse Program office for more information on lowering your drinking risks. The old saying that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is still true.

3. Leaders, your involvement is key to keeping our Soldiers safe. Make sure your first-line leaders take time to meet with each of your Soldiers "Under the Oak Tree" for a one-on-one discussion and verbal contract. This contract is strictly verbal and does not require any paperwork. It's Soldier to Soldier. Unlike a written contract, these meetings provide an excellent framework for leaders to have a dialogue with their Soldiers and to establish parameters for their off-duty activities and behavior. In addition to these informal meetings, perform the ASMIS-1 POV risk assessments required by the USAREUR 2005 Summer Safety Campaign before your Soldiers go on leave, pass, or TDY.

4. As you celebrate the Fourth of July, remember the fight for independence that led to the freedoms we cherish today. That tradition continues as we fight the Global War on Terrorism, and I am so very proud of each of you for your contributions to defending the principles on which our Nation was founded. Our goal continues to be *No Loss of Life*. With that goal as your watchword, have a great but safe Independence Day!

B. B. BELL
General, US Army
Commanding

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